

Work Session of the Common Council
Of the City of Plattsburgh, New York
April 3rd, 5:00PM

Present: Councilors Rachelle Armstrong (W1), Mike Kelly (W2), Paul O'Connell (W4), Becky Kasper (W5), Joshua Kretser (W6)

Absent: Dale Dowdle (W3), Mayor James Calnon

Snow Removal

Councilor Kelly went over the proposals for addressing snow removal issues and referred the list to Corporation Counsel for review of the current City ordinance. When this review is complete, the proposals will be forwarded for action by the Council. Councilor Kasper recommended that the PR portion of the proposals be sent to the Quality of Life Committee.

Community Advisory Committee for Visioning Grant

Engineer Kevin Farrington offered advice on inviting a cross-section of community members to serve on the advisory committee. When asked about a timeframe, he replied that now would be good. He also reported that three grants were submitted in March: N. Margaret project, Waterfront Development, and the Planning grant.

Farmer's Market expansion

Several members of the Farmer's Market attended to offer their insights about expansion. They recognize the constraints on space, and noted that they try to find balance with the variety of vendors and between crafters and producers. A major impediment to expansion is the use of the parking spaces, which also creates barriers for the regular set up of the market on Saturday. Tents are not viable as they are vulnerable to the weather. Councilor O'Connell remarked that perhaps cars could be ticketed, and praised the farmer's market for the contribution to the city. Council Kasper asked that we be cautious about restricting parking, as that would defeat the purpose of expansion. Councilor Kretser invited the market representatives to offer more ideas about creative expansion in the City.

Councilors Kretser and Dowdle remarked that groups seeking street drive slots should also be seeking alternate forms of fundraising and that the requests should not be a desperate plea.

Councilor Kasper remarked that the policy should be maintained as first come, first served, and asked whether the current policy limited groups to those in the city.

No action was taken and no recommendation was sent to the Council. Further discussion will be referred to the appropriate committee.

Apostles for Life

Councilor Armstrong opened this discussion by reading a statement concerning the previous vote against reserving City parking spaces for the protests, and expressing her dissatisfaction that the offer of an alternative safe zone had not been addressed in the Mayor's letter to the Council or in Corp. Counsel letter to the Council. Counselor Clute responded that he had not known of the compromise. Extensive discussion followed, the main points of which were:

- An alternative, across the street reserved space would ensure the preservation of First Amendment rights to the Apostles, and the preservation of safety and lack of hindrance to those who seek the services of Planned Parenthood.
- Dispute of the idea that the approval of the Take Back the Night march was analogous to the denial of the Apostle's request to reserve parking spaces in front of PP.
- Concern for behaviors and conduct during the weekly Thursday protests that hinder and intimidate patrons of PP.
- Need for review and tracking of such incidents if and when they occur.
- Affirmation by Counselor Clute that the City has the right to move protesters to locations they deem appropriate. "Time, place, and manner can be regulated," without violation of free speech rights.

Ambulance

There was discussion of the advisability of purchasing a second ambulance and hiring staffing for that. Acting Fire Chief Randy Stone noted that it would require 2 more staff per shift, but that could be one 8-hour shift, and money would not be expended on vehicle maintenance. He also pointed out that his initial idea to increase ambulance services was not a revenue- generating idea.

No action was taken and no recommendation was sent to the Council.

Committees

Councilors addressed the proposed committee structure and offered their requests:

Quality of Life: Kasper, Kretser, Kelly, Armstrong

Economic and Cultural Development: Kretser, Armstrong

Infrastructure: Kasper, Kelly

Councilor O'Connell remarked that he would like to attend committee meetings based on the type of issue and how it relates to the City Departments.

Community members:

Andy Golt addressed the Council about his attempts to encourage business owners to comply with snow removal regulations, to no avail.

Jerry Davis asked the Council to take leadership in addressing the possibility of constructing a bridge to Grand Isle, Vermont as a means of improving commerce in our region. He recommended that the Army Corps of Engineers be contacted for a full assessment.